CLAIMS:

1. A commercial package comprising;

means for determining the concentration of heme oxygenase-1 (HO-1) and/or a nucleotide sequence encoding HO-1, in bodily fluid or non-neural tissue obtained from a patient; and

instructions for assessing a dementing disease in the patient;

wherein said commercial package is used to predict the onset of, diagnose, or prognosticate a dementing disease.

2. A commercial package comprising;

means for determining the concentration of heme oxygenase-1 (HO-1) and/or a nucleotide sequence encoding HO-1, in bodily fluid or non-neural tissue obtained from a patient; and

instructions for comparing said concentration with the corresponding concentration of HO-1 and/or an HO-1 encoding nucleotide sequence in corresponding bodily fluid or non-neural tissue obtained from at least one control person;

wherein a reduced concentration is used to predict the onset of, diagnose, or prognosticate an Alzheimer dementing disease; and wherein a concentration that is not reduced indicates that the dementing disease is not an Alzheimer dementing disease.

3. The commercial package according to claim 1 wherein the means is for determining the concentration of HO-1 and the bodily fluid is selected from plasma and cerebrospinal fluid and the tissue is selected from lymphocytes and fibroblasts, or the means is for determining the concentration of HO-1 encoding nucleotide sequence and the tissue is selected from lymphocytes and fibroblasts.

4. The commercial package according to claim 2 wherein the means is for determining the concentration of HO-1 and the bodily fluid is selected from plasma and cerebrospinal fluid and the tissue is selected from lymphocytes and fibroblasts, or the means is for determining the concentration of HO-1 encoding nucleotide sequence and the tissue is selected from lymphocytes and fibroblasts.

5. A commercial package according to claim 3 wherein the bodily fluid is plasma.

6. A commercial package according to claim 4 wherein the bodily fluid is plasma.

7. The commercial package according to claim 3 wherein the means is for determining the concentration of HO-1 and the tissue is lymphocytes.

8. The commercial package according to claim 4 wherein the means is for determining the concentration of HO-1 and the tissue is lymphocytes.

9. The commercial package according to claim 3 wherein the means is for determining the concentration of HO-1 mRNA and the tissue is lymphocytes.

10. The commercial package according to claim 4 wherein the means is for determining the concentration of HO-1 mRNA and the tissue is lymphocytes.

11. The commercial package according to claim 1 wherein the dementing disease is selected from the group consisting

of Alzheimer's Disease, Age-Associated Cognitive Decline, Progressive Supranuclear Palsy, Vascular (i.e. multi-infarct) Dementia, Lewy Body Dementia, Huntington's Disease, Down's syndrome, normal pressure hydrocephalus, corticobasal ganglionic degeneration, multisystem atrophy, head trauma, Creutzfeld-Jacob disease, viral encephalitis and hypothyroidism.

12. The commercial package according to claim 2 wherein the dementing disease is selected from the group consisting of Alzheimer's Disease, Age-Associated Cognitive Decline, Progressive Supranuclear Palsy, Vascular (i.e. multi-infarct) Dementia, Lewy Body Dementia, Huntington's Disease, Down's syndrome, normal pressure hydrocephalus, corticobasal ganglionic degeneration, multisystem atrophy, head trauma, Creutzfeld-Jacob disease, viral encephalitis and hypothyroidism.

13. The commercial package according to claim 2 wherein the at least one control person is a normal age-matched person.

14. The commercial package according to claim 2 wherein the at least one control person is the patient from whom the corresponding concentration of HO-1 and/or an HO-1 encoding nucleotide sequence in bodily fluid and non-neural tissue was obtained at an earlier date, and the commercial package is used to prognosticate a dementing disease.

15. A commercial package comprising means for determining the concentration of heme oxygenase-1 (HO-1) and/or a nucleotide sequence encoding HO-1, in bodily fluid or tissue obtained from a patient, and instructions for comparing said concentration with an established standard of the corresponding concentration of HO-1 and/or an HO-1 encoding nucleotide

sequence in corresponding bodily fluid or tissue obtained from at least one normal age-matched control person or from the patient at an earlier time.

16. The commercial package according to claim 15 wherein the means is for determining the concentration of HO-1 and the bodily fluid is selected from plasma and cerebrospinal fluid and the tissue is selected from lymphocytes and fibroblasts, or the means is for determining the concentration of HO-1 encoding nucleotide sequence and the tissue is selected from lymphocytes and fibroblasts.

17. A commercial package according to claim 16 wherein the bodily fluid is plasma.

18. The commercial package according to claim 16 wherein the means is for determining the concentration of HO-1 or HO-1 mRNA and the tissue is lymphocytes.

19. The commercial package of claim 15 wherein the corresponding bodily fluid or tissue is obtained from at least one normal age-matched control person.

20. The commercial package of claim 15 wherein the corresponding bodily fluid or tissue is obtained from the patient at an earlier time.